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Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies



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Trinity Term, August 2022

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Education, University of Oxford,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Education (Higher Education)

Abstract

Sexual harassment has been pushed back to the forefront of issues in higher education as the fourth wave of feminism grips the western world. In the United Kingdom, this can be seen through a study which was conducted in 2018, showing that the majority of both undergraduate and postgraduate students have experienced sexual harassment and violence (Revolt, 2018). When specifically observing the University of Oxford, there has been a continuous rise in reports from 2018-2021 for sexual harassment and violence (SVHSS, 2022). This study utilizes a mixed-method approach and is informed by the intersectional and feminist theory. It explores the student perception of the current harassment policy at the University of Oxford, and how they may be related to the students' gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, age, degree level, department, enrollment status, and fee status. Data collected includes 41 student responses to an online survey distributed to all Oxford colleges, and 10 semi-structured follow-up interviews with students from diverse backgrounds. Five conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this research: (1) analysis of the survey results predominantly found statistical significance amongst postgraduate and undergraduate students, (2) analysis from the interviews show a lack of awareness surrounding the policy and resources due to insufficient promotion from the university, (3) high levels of confusion surrounding the policy, (4) significantly more feelings of negativity toward the university than neutral or positive, and (5) participants desire and find it necessary to have some form of mandatory trainings or seminars. These findings suggest further policy and procedural changes need to occur, further promotion of the policy and resources by the university, as well as offering more resources to students such as trainings, and finally creating a more cohesive relationship between the colleges and university to better understand the needs of students.

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List of Abbreviations

BPG	Best Practice Guidance
CUREC	Central University Research Ethics Committee
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors, and College Principals
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor
JCR	Junior Common Room
MCR	Middle Common Room
MPLS	Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Department
PPH	Private Permanent Hall
OUSU	Oxford University Student Union
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SEM	Science, Engineering, and Medicine
SVHSS	Sexual Violence and Harassment Support Service
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

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1. Introduction

Sexual harassment has always existed in some form, yet it has not always been easily identifiable. It was not until the mid-1970's in North America that a term was even developed to represent the concept of receiving unwanted sexual attention (Eds. Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). The term "sexual harassment" was coined by a group called Working Women United in the United States under the Human Affairs Program at Cornell (Eds. Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). Quickly thereafter, in the early 1980's, the term made its way to the United Kingdom (Eds. Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). As time has continued on, the term has developed significantly, resulting in various definitions of sexual harassment in academic literature. The overarching definition that all academics seem to agree on though is that sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention (see OUSU Women's Committee, 1984; Lockwood Harris, 2019; Hill & Silva, 2005). Variations of this typically occur when academics encompass different types of behaviors (i.e., crude jokes, unwanted touching, rape, etc.) into their definitions (Reese & Lindenberg, 1999). For the purpose of this study, my definition of sexual harassment will be:

> Any unwanted sexual attention a person experiences, both physical and verbal, no matter whether or not it has been explicitly stated to be unwanted.

The general situation of sexual harassment in United Kingdom (UK) higher education system displays an ongoing struggle between administrations lack of acknowledgement of sexual harassment as an issue and students' needs for support (Boyer, 2022). As stated previously sexual harassment has been a topic of discussion since the term was first introduced in in the mid-1970's, yet universities in the UK are still struggling to combat the issue to this day. With statistics like, approximately 62% of students in the UK have experienced sexual violence and harassment, it is concerning that issues such as this have not been addressed immediately (Revolt, 2018). These statistics indicate a greater need for exploration into the topic of sexual harassment and the policies held within institutions of higher education, so as to best learn how to approach the problem at hand.

1.1 Sexual harassment policies in UK higher education

Harassment policies were introduced more recently into higher education institutions (HEIs) as this was predominantly seen as a workplace problem (Thomas, 2004). In the

UK, while the Sex Discrimination Act came into law in 1975**,** this did not distinctly incorporate the issue of sexual harassment, despite it falling under the umbrella of sexual discrimination, until 2005 (UK Public General Acts, 1975). The act was then repealed on 5 April 2011 and the concept of discrimination on the basis of sex was incorporated into the Equality Act of 2010 (UK Public General Acts, 2010).[1] In accordance with this act, higher education institutions in the United Kingdom currently form their harassment policies utilizing this as a framework. The framework suggests that harassment occurs when one person "engages in unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic" and further violates this person's dignity and/or creates "an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment" (UK Public General Acts, 2010). It continues on to say that this can also occur with "unwanted conduct of sexual nature" or is "related to gender reassignment or sex". The protected characteristics as outlined in this legislation are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (UK Public General Acts, 2010). The initial legislation, as enacted in 2010, is still the current framework used for these policies with no revisions taking place in over a decade (UK Public General Acts, 2010). Furthermore, because this is a framework for HEIs to build off of, policies, requirements for trainings, and access to resources can vary across institutions in the UK (The National Archives, 2020).

However, these policies tend to be enacted differently in other countries, such as the United States. In the US, in 1972 the Title IX policy was enacted federally against gender discrimination and harassment (OCR Department of Education, 2020a). Because of this mandate, all HEIs that receive federal funding in the US must include the exact policy (OCR Department of Education, 2020b). The difference between the US and UK policies can be related back to the scope that they both cover. In general, the Equality Act is a much broader policy for harassment, which has a section of gender and sex-based discrimination, rather than the Title IX policy which is solely dedicated to this topic (UK Public General Acts, 2010; OCR Department of Education, 2020a). Yet, this does not mean that the US has gone unscathed by issues of sexual harassment and violence. It

[1] Prior to this, various organizations attempted to advocate for support for women specifically in higher education such as the Oxford University Student Union Women's Committee (OUSU Women's Committee, 1984).

was not until 1990, when the Clery Act was passed, that colleges and universities in the United States were required to track and report statistics of sexual harassment and assault (Lockwood Harris, 2019). Furthermore, in 2017, the US Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, instituted changed to Title IX which made it more difficult for students to report these crimes and receive support (Lockwood Harris, 2019). As the Biden administration took charge, in 2021 these Title IX changes were attempted to be rolled back while also instituting further support for students who were affected in a more intersectional way (i.e., women, LGBTQ+, racial/ethnic minorities, etc.) (Biden, 2021).

1.2 Sexual harassment policies at the University of Oxford

Considering the contextual differences, it important for this study to understand the institutional context of sexual harassment at the University of Oxford specifically, which is chosen as the case study institution. The University of Oxford is a university system made up of 45 colleges, 44 of which accept postgraduate and/or undergraduate students. Because of this college system, there are centralized policies as well as policies that are college specific creating an interesting dichotomy within the university system. The rationale of choosing this university will be explained further in the Methodology Chapter.

The definition of harassment, as outlined in the Harassment Policy and Procedures, at the University of Oxford is:

> ...engaging in unwanted or unwarranted conduct which has the purpose of: violating another person's dignity, or creating an intimidating hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another person. The recipient does not need to have explicitly stated that the behaviour was unwanted. (2017, p. 2)

Furthermore, behaviors of sexual harassment are outlined by this policy, including "inappropriate body language, sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes, and unwanted sexual advances and touching" (2017, p. 3). It is unclear when the first policy offering a description of sexual harassment was introduced, but the current policy in use was enacted 1 December 2014, with minor revisions made 21 April 2017 (University of Oxford, 2017).

There is one policy at the University of Oxford that handles harassment of all forms, including sexual harassment. The definition of sexual harassment by Oxford has been stated previously, however it is important to note that there is not a stand-alone policy for sexual harassment specifically. This policy offers definitions, the rules and guidelines of the university, and procedural outlines for instances of harassment for both faculty and students. It is important to note that that while this policy covers all members at the university, this study focuses specifically on the student group and their perceptions towards this policy. Furthermore, the Oxford Colleges can publish and adhere to their own policies as well as the overall University policy.

By manually checking the official websites of every college at the University of Oxford (in April, May and June 2022), this study found that out of the 44 colleges at Oxford, five do not have their own policy (including Campion Hall, Harris Manchester College, Kellogg College, St Cross College, and St Stephen's House) and only adhere to the university policy.[2] The individual college policies tend to highlight their own examples and definitions of sexual harassment as well as highlighting the definitions present in the Oxford University policy (see Worcester College, 2021; Blackfriars Hall, 2020; St Catherine's College, 2021). These policies further explain the process for filing complaints and different courses of actions available for students to take if they face harassment of any kind by faculty or students (University of Oxford, 2017). It is important to note that these policies tend to also include that if any criminal conduct is believed to have taken place, the college and university reserve the right to not conduct an investigation and will direct the student toward the proper channels (i.e., the police) (University of Oxford, 2017).

1.3 Sexual harassment at the University of Oxford

Sexual harassment is not a contemporary problem at Oxford among the student group. In 1984, the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) Women's Committee published a study delving into the sexual harassment of women on campus. This committee highlighted the general discourse surrounding sexism and sexual harassment, stating

[2] Prior to 15 June 2022, there was no college policy published on the Harris Manchester College website and the data collected at utilized for this dissertation reflects the lack of policy for the 2021-2022 academic year.

that both are of similar origin, yet sexual harassment is more strongly associated with intimidation rather than marginalization (OUSU Women's Committee, 1984). To further this claim, the OUSU Women's Committee staked a claim that sexual harassment was a manifestation of the sexism they experienced on a regular basis (1984). As a result of the treatment that they were enduring on campus, the OUSU Women's Committee decided to create a survey in which female respondents could indicate what they believed was the reasoning for sexual harassment.

It was found that overall, female participants believed that they had provoked men in some way, or that the women were making claims that they had been sexual harassment were lying (OUSU Women's Committee, 1984). Furthermore, many colleges and senior members refused to take these claims seriously due to two reasons. The first being that it was the status quo and expected that men would treat women this way. The second being that no "loud complaints" by women had been made seemingly indicated to the administrative staff that sexual harassment was not occurring. After the results were published only one college, which remained anonymous, took matters seriously and wrote in a position for a female tutor into its statutes (OUSU Women's Committee, 1984). Historically, while this happened nearly four decades ago, this set a dangerous precedent for colleges as semi-autonomous institutions, allowing them to choose how to approach issues of sexual harassment and violence, independently of the university, unless mandated to do so.

In the current years, the University of Oxford has come under much scrutiny in the news for its handling of sexual harassment and violence cases (see Nikolic, 2021; Davies & Jazeera, 2021; Adams, 2022; Alencar, 2022). In July of 2021, student campaigners accused the University of Oxford of "enabling sexual violence and harassment" as well as housing "institutional frameworks and cultures that aid and abet [this behavior]" (Nikolic, 2021). Later in 2021, Deborah Davies and Al Jazeera uncovered findings that indicated that two professors had abused their position with students and had been for multiple years. Furthermore, the University refused to comment on these cases and these professors still remain employed by the university (Davies & Jazeera, 2021). Moving into April of 2022, a student a Lady Margaret Hall was sexually assaulted by a fellow student while sleep. This resulted in the university paying damages to this

student as she accused the university of negligence and discrimination (Adams, 2022). Finally, in May of 2022, an investigation into sexual harassment at the University of Oxford by *Cherwell* found that there had been at least 93 complaints of this since 2017 (Alencar, 2022).

Over three years, there has been an overall increase in the number of cases being reported at the University of Oxford either to the Sexual Violence and Harassment Support Service (SVHSS) or the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) (OASV, 2022). In the 2018-2019 academic year, 167 referrals were made to the service, followed by a 12% increase the following year, resulting in 187 referrals in 2019-2020 (SHVSS, 2020; SHVSS, 2021). However, in the 2020-2021 year there were 224 cases referred, which meant there was a 21% increase in cases (SHVSS, 2022). The rise in cases is particularly concerning as it has not seemed to reach a plateau after the pandemic and is instead continuing to rise. [3] As a result of this rise, the SVHSS has worked to expand the service by hiring a full-time Specialist Caseworker and additional Specialist Advisors (SHVSS, 2022). Furthermore, while there are trainings offered for students through this service, it is not required that every student partakes in sexual violence and harassment training despite a clear need to combat the rise in cases (University of Oxford, 2022). A select few colleges have mandated training, but as it stands there is currently no centralized training required by the university (University of Oxford, 2022).

1.4 The study

From all of this preliminary information and data, this study hopes to address what the perceptions held by students are toward this policy and the reasonings behind these views. The research questions, stated more clearly in chapter two, were aimed to pinpoint the climate surrounding sexual harassment and violence at the University of Oxford, while trying to take into account the long-standing history of this culture.

The study will utilize a mixed-method approach, based in intersectionality and feminist theories, with surveys and interviews. It will explore the relationships between student

[3] Worth noting is that the SVHSS was not established until 2018 and this supposed rise in cases could also be due to students becoming more aware of resources available to them.

identities and perceptions from both a qualitative and quantitative approach, which will allow for a better understanding of the climate surrounding sexual harassment at the University of Oxford. This dissertation consists of six chapters, starting with this introduction, followed by the literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature about sexual harassment and violence that occurs in the higher education sector of the United Kingdom. After highlighting a brief background on sexual harassment prevalence in the UK, the literature review dives into studies surrounding the perceptions of the policy and student backgrounds, diving into marginalized backgrounds, and the categorical variables employed in this research. However, it mainly focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of sexual harassment and violence research, utilizing both feminist and intersectional theories to inform the research questions and hypotheses of this study.

2.1 Studies on sexual harassment in UK higher education

Sexual harassment and violence have become increasingly pertinent issues in the United Kingdom, especially in higher education in the last decade due to the reignition of feminist movements such as #MeToo (Steele et al., 2021). Despite efforts being made over approximately the last 50 years to combat sexual harassment and violence in the UK, there has been limited success in enacting and engaging with the concept of "equal opportunities" (Thomas, 2004). Enacting governmental policies to narrow the divide occurring due to sex-based discrimination was at the forefront of workplace efforts. Because of this shift, educational efforts within higher education institutions also began to reflect these same ideologies, yet they neglected to fully combat the underrepresentation of women and the sexual harassment of students (Thomas, 2004). As the workforce shifted and education sector followed suit, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors, and College Principals (CVCP) took action promoting a 'Code of Good Practice' to ensure equal opportunities on the basis of sex (CVCP, 1990). The addition of these policies into higher education institutions initially took time to fully become adopted and furthermore, were not specific enough. This specificity was prompted by a lack of protection surrounding students facing harassment leading the CVCP to issue more guidelines (CVCP, 1990). While this expedited the initial process into establishing harassment policies at the university level, the policies and procedures were not nearly comprehensive enough to combat the endemic issue of sexual harassment and violence that has persisted all these years (Thomas, 2004).

Despite universities instituting their own policies to combat these issues, sexual harassment and violence has not subsided even to this day with multiple studies citing high rates of occurrence (see Revolt, 2018; Steele et al., 2021, NUS, 2011). In 2011, a study was conducted in the United Kingdom by the National Union of Students to determine the rates at which female students experience harassment, stalking, violence, and sexual assault occurring at universities. It was found that 68%, or over two thirds, of survey respondents had experienced some form of harassment, whether it was verbal or non-verbal (NUS, 2011). More recently, the Revolt Sexual Assault study, conducted in 2018 with a survey of 4,500 students from 153 UK institutions, found that nearly 62%, or three in five, graduate and undergraduate students have experienced sexual violence (Revolt, 2018). A similar study conducted at one university in central southern England in 2021, found that 18% of participants indicated they had experienced an incidence of sexual violence and 50% indicated an experience of sexual harassment (Steele et al., 2021). Looking at these three studies, it is obvious that harassment is still very prevalent in the UK higher education system and nationally there has been little to know change in the cases of harassment occurring in nearly a decade. These high occurrences suggests that there may be an issue with the policies and procedures at these institutions themselves, or with the enaction of them (Thomas, 2004).

2.2Perceptions of the policies

As this study focuses on how and why students perceive the policies at the University of Oxford it is necessary to review previous literature surrounding perceptions of sexual harassments around the world. In order to establish a pattern surrounding perceptions of these policies, it is necessary to determine the extent to which this has been occurring over time. Starting with a study conducted in the United States, the awareness levels of undergraduate female students had of the policy, illegality, and grievance procedures was researched (Williams et al., 1992). This study found statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) showing that over the years female students garnered a greater awareness for the illegality of sexual harassment at the university. It was also determined that the implementation of the policy resulted in fewer reports of staff/faculty harassment, but the reasoning for this was not conclusive (Williams et al., 1992). In South Africa, a study was conducted that looked to determine the efficacy of the implementation of sexual harassment policies at universities (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007). It was determined that

there was an implementation issue stemming from a "lack of coordination" amongst stakeholders and university administration, resulting in an assumption that there is no occurrence of sexual harassment at the university. This led to a further loss of confidence in the policy and procedures enacted at the university amongst students and staff (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007). A study conducted at the University of Zambia looked specifically at student perspectives of sexual harassment (Menon, et al., 2009). This study found that, along with female students being more likely to experience sexual harassment, they were also more likely to perceive that this was a larger issue on campus than male students and had higher rates of assumption that there would be both peer harassment and student-faculty harassment occurring (Menon, et al., 2009).

Looking at more recent studies, a 2020 article written by Fredrik Bondestam and Maja Lundqvist systematically reviewed policies, procedures, and research regarding sexual harassment within higher education. This research highlighted key issues regarding a lack of understanding surrounding educative efforts and minimal research conducted from a qualitative or intersectional approach (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). Furthermore, Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) emphasize that "critical knowledge is a prerequisite for change" (p. 413) advocating for a greater attention to educating people in an attempt to create further preventative measures and strive towards the eradication of sexual harassment. The final article looked at numerous studies conducted in a cross-sectional approach and highlighted numerous implications for research, practice, and policy (Klein & Martin, 2021). The implications for policies specifically supported the need for multiple examples of sexual harassment to be present, clear descriptions of procedures, and the introduction of policies in academic associations (Klein & Martin, 2021). From all of these studies, it is clear there is an overarching feeling of uncertainty and a lack of confidence surrounding sexual harassment policies. This is further fueled by a lack of understanding of campus culture from stakeholders and administrators, promoting a need for more qualitative approaches to research on sexual harassment to be conducted.

2.3 Students backgrounds

A student's background and identity are extremely important aspects to deciphering the underlying context of sexual harassment and violence. To better understand this,

multiple categorical variables (race, gender, sexual orientation, age, degree level, departments, fee status, and enrollment status) will be explored within this study. However, after reviewing the literature, there was no data found regarding fee status and enrollment status in relation to perceptions of sexual harassment policies. As this is a gap in the literature, it was necessary to include these as demographic questions within the study to later run analysis on these categories. There was also a gap in the literature surrounding certain interdepartmental connections to the occurrence and perceptions of sexual harassment.

2.3.1 Marginalized and Underrepresented Backgrounds

There are five backgrounds (race, gender, sexuality, enrollment status, and fee status) that have been classified as marginalized or underrepresented for the purpose of this research. A study conducted in the United States hoped to determine what formal and informal disclosure of sexual harassment and violence looks like across race (Mennicke et al., 2021). It was found that participants who were of another racial/ethnic identity than White were less likely to disclose dating violence. However, this study also found that White participants were more likely to be victims of sexual harassment than students who identified as racial and ethnic minorities (Mennicke et al., 2021). Yet, according to Bernadette Calafell (2014) between 60-85% of women identifying as racial and ethnic minorities report sexual harassment, which is a higher rate than that of their White counterparts. When looking at multiple studies on gender and sexuality, it was determined that identifying as a woman or sexual minority increased risk for sexual harassment (Street et al., 2007; Klein & Martin, 2021). To further this, it was also found that men who "deviate from the prescriptions of traditional masculinity" are more susceptible to sexual harassment (Holland et al., 2016). There were a few gaps that presented themselves in the literature. The first gap being a lack of research on students who identify outside of the gender binary. My study aims to address this by incorporating more demographic options such as transgender male, transgender female, nonbinary, and other. By offering these choices, there may be varying perceptions found within these various gender groups that have not been previously reported on. The other gaps, as previously stated, were in the categorical variables of enrollment status and fee status, as there was no literature found on the two in relation to sexual harassment.

2.3.2 Age and Degree Level

According to Schneider (1987), degree level and age go hand in hand when it comes to matters of sexual harassment. It was found that as female graduate students are older than undergraduate students, they are less likely to view sexual harassment from faculty in a positive light. However, due to the dependency of things such as career opportunities or the completion of a degree, a graduate student is less likely to act against sexual harassment from a faculty member (Schneider, 1987). A study conducted in the United States looked specifically at the knowledge and utilization of resources by graduate students (Bloom et al., 2021). This study found that graduate students had limited knowledge of any services available through the university, and despite having mandatory trainings, the topics of discussion focused more on employee responsibility than information regarding sexual harassment and violence (Bloom et al., 2021). Finally, another study conducted within the United States surveyed male and female graduate students to determine the rates of sexual harassment (Rosenthal et al., 2016). It was found that female graduate students experience sexually harassing behaviors from faculty, staff, and students significantly more that male graduate students (Rosenthal et al., 2016). Despite the findings of this literature, a gap found amongst the limited research done on the age of participants. While there is a clear delineation according to the literature on degree level, which typically also coincides with age, more should be done looking specifically at age as there could be key information regarding generational divides when it comes to the perceptions of these policies.

2.3.3 Disciplines

There is very little research exploring the differences between departments at the university level. However, within fields relating to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) there are a few studies which highlight the nature of sexual harassment (see National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; Clancy et al., 2017). According to a study conducted by the National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in 2018, sexual harassment of female medical students is higher than that of students who do not study science, engineering, or medicine (non-SEM), but those who studies engineering experienced harassment at the same rates as non-SEM students. Furthermore, the normalization of sexual harassment within this field of higher education is typically excused for male faculty as it is “what

they have always done" (National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018, p. 53). Another study conducted in the field of science determined that female scientists were more likely to face sexual harassment as students which typically occurred at a peer-to-peer level (Clancy et al., 2017). The study further supported the notion that women within this field were more likely to report violations regarding sexual harassment than men (Clancy et al., 2017). A gap in the literature surrounding disciplines would not only be the lack of research conducted on non-STEM related fields, but also between non-STEM related fields. More specifically there was a lack of literature found on differences amongst humanities and social sciences departments. However, at Oxford specifically, due to a higher percentage of female students enrolled within the humanities department, an assumption can be made that there is potentially less sexual harassment occurring than in the social sciences department, although we cannot be certain without proper research.

2.4 Theoretical Perspectives

There are two theoretical perspectives that will be utilized as informative measures in this body of work. The first being feminist theory which is grounded in the gender equality and is utilized to make sense of the institutionalized gender-biases which are rooted within society. The second theoretical framework discussed and used to inform the literature around sexual harassment and violence is the theory of intersectionality, or the concept of multiple different identities existing within one person which can result in more complexities when it comes to prejudice and discrimination.

2.4.1 Feminist Theory

Mary Wollstonecraft, an author from England during the 18th century, is seen today as one of the founders of contemporary feminist theory, or, simply put, the theory that men and women are not currently treated as equals in society and that, in turn, effects the everyday life of a woman and creates boundaries for her. While Wollstonecraft's initial work, entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, was thrust into the public sphere, her further work, such as *Maria*, highlighted the gap between the theoretical realm and practical realm (Mettifogo, 2005). Despite this initial wave of feminism, there has been numerous modifications over the years, adapting to each generations conceptualization of what gender equality looks like (Burkett, 2022).

Currently, the fourth wave of feminism, which began in 2012, is what is widely accepted in practice today, focusing more specifically on sexual harassment and assault, body shaming, and the culture surrounding rape (Burkett, 2022).

The conceptual divide between the practical and theoretical aspects of gender equality still exist to this day embedded in the societal and institutional framework of higher education. This can be seen through the numerous studies conducted utilizing gender discrimination and feminist theory as driving frameworks (see Leaper & Starr, 2019; Osuna-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Lombardo & Bustelo, 2020; Bergenfeld et al., 2022). In 2019, a study consisting of female undergraduates studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) looked to determine if the negative biases they faced due to their gender identity resulted in moving away from STEM-related fields in careers (Leaper & Starr, 2019). It was found that the majority of participants experienced gender bias (60.9%) or sexual harassment (78.1%) and that those who were exposed to these negative experiences were more likely to have negative outlooks toward motivation to continue on with STEM in studies and future careers (Leaper & Starr, 2019). A study conducted at the University of Córdoba in Spain hoped to determine the risk within a relationship regarding gender-based violence and harassment (Osuna-Rodríguez et al., 2020). It was found that participants associated a higher perception of risk when they had greater knowledge of this violence and harassment, and it was particularly high in women. However, it was also found that this type of violence and harassment was one of the least common to occur (Osuna-Rodríguez et al., 2020).

Emanuela Lombardo and Maria Bustelo also conducted a study in Spain, which looked to determine how implementation of gender equality policies were handled at the university level and what barriers or promotional efforts were made during this time (2020). The results found indicated that there were multiple factors at play in indicating the success of the implementation of the policy. However, it was determined that preconceived notions of gender at an institutionalized level, along with the normalization of harassment in everyday life disrupted the implementation of the policies (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2020). Finally, a study conducted at a Jordanian university looked to explore the nature, prevalence, and correlates of sexual harassment

(Bergenfeld et al., 2022). It was found through surveys and focus groups, of both students and faculty, that the sexual harassment occurring was institutionalized and rooted in multiple different causes such as established gender norms, policies, tribal influence, and upbringing (Bergenfeld et al., 2022).

2.4.2 Intersectionality

The theory of intersectionality accentuates the concept that each individual has multiple facets to their identity which informs their understanding of the world and can further result in more complex forms of discrimination to arise (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality builds off the framework supplied by both feminist and antiracist theories and has since expanded to including various angles of the identity such as disabilities, sexuality, and class (Carbado et al., 2013). This framework is especially important when dissecting sexual harassment and violence as this type of violation does not necessarily occur only because of gender identity, but can also be informed by, but not limited to, stereotypes surrounding race, sexuality, disabilities, religion, and class (Carbado, 2013; Calafell, 2014).

Studies conducted on the relationship between sexual harassment and intersectional theory have varying results, with some research showing relevance between race and sexual harassment and others showing no significant differences (see Mennicke et al., 2021; Raj et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2021). A study conducted in the United States at a large university in the Southeast over a time span of four year (2016-2019), looked at the impact of sexual violence and harassment on the identities of participants (Mennicke et al., 2021). This study utilized gender, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity as categorical variables and found that participants who identified as male, non-white, heterosexual were less likely to report incidences of sexual harassment and violence suggesting that introducing further programming and culturally tailored services may help increase overall feelings of trust and support in reporting (Mennicke et al., 2021).

Another study conducted in the US hoped to explore the racial and ethnic disparities in sexual harassment from an intersectional approach (Raj et al., 2021). This study found that 81% of women had experienced sexual harassment as compared to 43% of men,

with 30.8% of these women experiencing depression or anxiety as a result and only 19.8% of men. There were no significant differences amongst races or ethnicities, but it was reported that there was an increased risk in Hispanic women compared to White women for sexual harassment (Raj et al., 2021). Finally, a study conducted across eight campuses in the United States allowed participants to indicate if they had experienced sexual harassment (Wood et al., 2021). The study found that students who identified as female, undergraduate, white, and gender and sexual minorities were more likely to face sexual harassment. Furthermore, those who identified as racial and ethnic minorities reported less experiences as a whole than White participants, yet if they had faced harassment it occurred to a greater extent (Wood et al., 2021). Currently, there is no work that has been found to highlight the intersectional aspects of sexual harassment with perceptions of policies to combat this in higher education in the United Kingdom.

2.5 The study

The review of the literature reveals that there has been a plethora of quantitative research done surrounding race and gender in regard to rates of sexual harassment. However, there is a need for more qualitative work to be done with sexual harassment policies as well as addressing gaps in the literature surrounding marginalized and underrepresented groups at universities such as part-time and international students, as well as research exploring interdepartmental divides. As there is less research surrounding actual perceptions held by students surrounding the policies, this will be at the forefront of this study. Furthermore, by utilizing the theoretical frameworks of feminism and intersectionality, it is hoped that a greater understanding is found for the influences of gender and racial biases on perceptions of sexual harassment policies. Based off previous literature, this study aims to address the following research questions:

(1) How do students perceive the sexual harassment and violence policy at the University of Oxford?
(2) How does a students' identity shape how they perceive this policy?
(3) Why do students perceive the policy this way?

There are condensed hypotheses that can be made on the extant literature:

(1) Those from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds would score lower for feelings of support, feelings of protection, and feelings of safety than those who are not from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds.[4]

(2) Those from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds would score higher on resources read, resource awareness, and understanding of harassment policies than those who are not from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds.

(3) Those who are aged 18-24 would score lower for feelings of support, feelings of protection, and feelings of safety than those who are aged 25 and older.

(4) Those who are aged 18-24 would score higher on resources read, resource awareness, and understanding of harassment policies than those who are aged 25 and older.

(5) Those who study in the mathematical, physical, and life sciences and medicine departments would score lower for feelings of support, feelings of protection, and feelings of safety than those who study in the social sciences and humanities departments.

(6) Those who study in the mathematical, physical, and life sciences and medicine departments would score higher on resources read, resource awareness, and understanding of harassment policies than those who study in the social sciences and humanities departments.

(7) Those who study in the social sciences department would score lower for feelings of support, feelings of protection, and feelings of safety than those who study in the humanities department.

(8) Those who study in the social sciences department would score higher on resources read, resource awareness, and understanding of harassment policies than those who study in the humanities department.

[4] For the purpose of this study, marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds include those who identify as anything other than heterosexual, white, cis-male, full-time, and/or domestic students.

3. Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology used when creating this research. The first section will explore the ontology and epistemology of mixed methods research, which will be followed by the research design itself. The next sections will look at the sampling recruitment methods, demographics of the survey and interview participants, and the survey and interview structures. Finally, this chapter will conclude by discussing the analytical measures used and highlighting the ethical considerations and reflections for this study.

3.1 Ontology and Epistemology

The relationship between ontology and epistemology depicts "what we can know...and how we can justify that we know it" (Eds. Hesse-Biber & Burke Johnson, 2016, p. 4). This is important for to explain for this study, as these two systems directly impact the choice of methods. As the methods used are rooted in the resources available, research questions, skills and expertise of the researcher, and also their power and position, it is pertinent to discuss the ontological and epistemological underpinnings (Eds. Hesse-Biber & Burke Johnson, 2016). As, the belief of ontology assumes the concept of a multi-faceted reality existing, while the epistemology exists to rationalize this (Mertens, 2012). Utilizing this combination of beliefs led to the decision to conduct a mixed-methods study with this research. The background knowledge, as well as what we hope to learn through introducing a mixed-methods approach to this study, explains how and why students perceive the sexual harassment policy the way that they do in order to be more conducive to enacting social change (Mertens, 2012). As the utilization of intersectionality and feminist theories informed this work, the concept of a reality in which there can be multiple truths was already introduced, as I was working with the perceptions of students and their identities, which are subjective in themselves but can also hold objective truths (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Research Design

Guided by the ontological and epistemological perspectives, this study uses a mixed-method approach. When exploring various research methods, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative analysis allowed for a greater understanding of both collective ideologies and individual themes surrounding sexual harassment policies (Creswell &

Plano Clark, 2018). A quantitative approach to methods typically results in the generalization of larger trends occurring among populations, while a qualitative approach allows for more nuanced and personal recounts and themes (Schutt, 2015). However, when conducting studies like this, while there is a greater chance of highlighting reflexivity and generalizability, the validity of the research may come into question, especially when there is a lack of integration between the two methods due to time constraints (Mertens, 2012; Bryman, 2011). Yet, by utilizing both forms of data collection and analysis, the study aims to offer greater insight into both how (quantitative) and why (qualitative) students perceive the sexual harassment policy at the University of Oxford this way.

3.3 Sampling and Recruitment Methods

A combination of purposive and random sampling methods was utilized to collect data for the survey. I first collected the email contact of all presidents of the Middle Common Rooms (MCRs) and Junior Common Rooms (JCRs) at the 44 Oxford college, via a search on the official webpages in April 2022. In total, 44 contacts were identified through this method. In May of 2022, after I received CUREC approval, I then sent out an email to every president, asking if they can circulate an online survey to students enrolled at these colleges and if not, if a flyer can be posted in the common rooms. After two weeks I also sent out a second round of follow-up emails to the presidents. Of the 44 Oxford colleges, I had a 31.8% (14) response rate: 13 of them stated that they could send an email and the other one suggested that the flyer would be sufficient. As I did not receive communication from many of the other college MCR and JCR presidents about electronically distributing my survey, I decided to post flyers in either the common rooms or in the entrance at all of the 44 colleges in May 2022. The email, survey and flyers are available in Appendixes A through D.

The goal of the survey was to collect at least 100 responses with a maximum of 250 student respondents. However, due to the low response rate of MCR and JCR presidents furthered by a low response rate of those who inevitably saw the flyer and emails, only 41 students at the university took part in the survey.

The survey has 9 questions about demographics, 11 questions surroundings topics of perceptions of mental health, 4 questions that were descriptive statistics, 2 questions regarding consent to contact participants about taking part in an interview at a later date, and a final open response question for students to leave any comments or feedback. It also included and introductory statement which indicated that (1) the study concerned topics surrounding sexual harassment policies, (2) participation was completely voluntary, (3) participants had the right to withdraw at any time while completing the survey, (4) by completing the survey they were giving their consent for data to be used in a cumulative form, and (5) participants must be students at the University of Oxford aged 18 or older. The survey is hosted on Jisc Online Surveys, as this is the recommended online platform for surveys by the Oxford IT Services. In order to further maintain confidentiality, all data collected remained anonymous and were stored on a password protected computer, only accessible by the researcher.

In the final question of the survey, students were able to indicate whether they would be interested in partaking in an interview. Of the 41 respondents, 39.0% (16) and have filled in their contact information. With considerations of the study design, ethical approval, timeframe, and the availability of potential participants, this study aimed to conduct a maximum of 10 interviews. Therefore, I then contacted the participants via random sampling. Each email was assigned a number and then a random number generator between one and 16 was utilized to select participants. In the first pull of numbers 12, 14, 16, 11, 10, 2, 6, 1, 5, and 9 were drawn. Two participants opted to withdraw their name from the interview process and three never responded to the initial email of request or follow-up email sent one week later. Five more numbers (13, 15, 3, 4, and 7) were drawn and all responded, bringing the total interview count to the maximum number of 10 participants.

Prior to the interviews, participants were required to read a participant information sheet (see Appendix E) which outlined that (1) participation was completely voluntary, (2) participants could withdraw from the interview at any time, (3) any identifying information would be removed from the final reporting, (4) benefits and risks of the study, and (5) who to contact if there were any concerns about the study. After reading this, participants were asked to complete a written consent form (see Appendix F)

which gave permission for the researcher to record the interview, as well as use direct quotes, and outlined that if they prefer, the participant had up to two weeks after the interview to withdraw their data from the study.

3.4 Survey and Interview Demographics

The survey demographics (as seen in Figures 1 and 2 and Table 1) indicated that there was an over sampling of participants who identified as female (60.9%, *n* = 25), white (73.2%, *n* = 30), postgraduate (78.0%, *n* = 32), and those studying humanities (63.4%, *n* = 26) compared to the overall population statistics reported by the University of Oxford. There is no known data collected by the University of Oxford on students' age or sexual orientation, so it is not known if there was any over sampling that occurred for these demographics. The University of Oxford reported the population demographics for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students as follows: Female (49.4%, *n* = 12,005), White (66.0%, *n* = 17,170), Postgraduate (50.7%, *n* = 12,320), and those studying humanities (25.1%, *n* = 6,090). However, statistics collected surrounding full-time (95.1%, *n* = 39) versus part-time (4.9%, *n* = 2) enrolment and domestic (58.5%, *n* = 24) versus international (41.5%, *n* = 17) fee status proved to be strikingly close to the actual university statistics.[5] When looking at the distribution of sexual orientation and age, the majority of students identified as heterosexual (63.4%, *n* = 26) and between 18-24 years old (70.7%, *n* = 29).

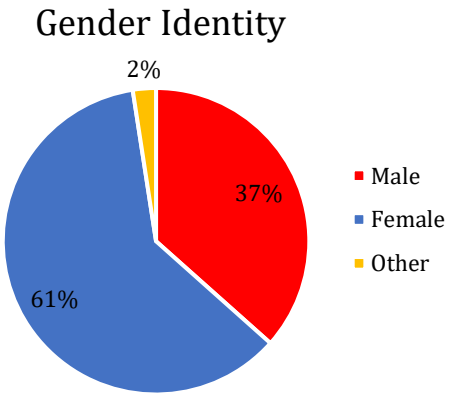


Fig 1: Gender identity of survey participants

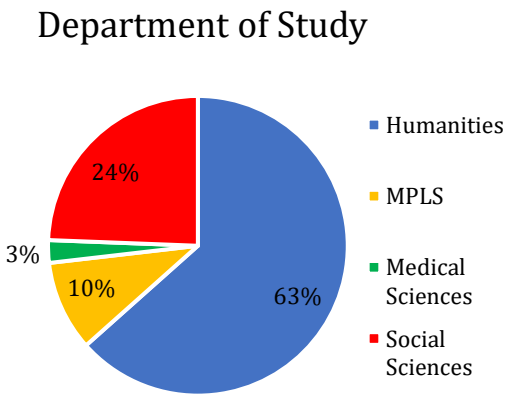


Fig 2: Primary department of study of survey participants

To protect the anonymization of interview participants, not all demographic information is

[5] The University of Oxford reported 91.3% (*n* = 22,165) of students as full-time and 59.7% (*n* = 14,500) as students with domestic fee status.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Characteristic	Number	Percentage (%)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	30	73.2
Non-White	11	26.8
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	26	63.4
Other	15	36.6
Degree Level		
Undergraduate	9	22
Postgraduate	32	78
Enrolment Status		
Full-Time	39	95.1
Part-Time	2	4.9
Fee Status		
Domestic	24	58.5
International	17	41.5
Age (years)		
18-24	29	70.7
25-44	12	29.3

reported here. In general, the interview participants belonged to a mixture of PPHs and colleges at oxford, and 60% (6) of the interviewees identified as female, while the remaining 40% (4) identified as male.

There was also a mixture of participants of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, postgraduates and undergraduates, and part-time and full-time students. There was also an even split of 50% (5) domestic and 50% (5) international students.

3.5 Survey and Interview Structure and Questions

Questions asked in the survey (see Appendix A) hoped to determine perceptions held by students by addressing the resources read and awareness of them, understanding of the policy, and feelings of support, protection, and safety in participants. The utilization of these various indexes, then ran against the categorical variables (demographics) also offered insight into how student identities shape the perceptions that were held (Mennicke et al., 2021). The incorporation of descriptive statistic questions also allowed for perceptions held amongst the aggregate to be explored and if there was any reliability amongst participants (Schutt, 2015).

Participants who opted into the interview portion of the study were made aware that the process would last between 30 minutes to an hour. The average time for each interview was approximately 00:34:25.9 minutes with the shortest interview lasting 00:21:21.0 minutes and the longest lasting 00:49:23.0 minutes. Interviews were semi-structured, meaning that while there were some questions pre-determined, but they could be asked in any order the researcher saw fit (Schutt, 2015). This structure also allowed for more leniency in asking follow-up questions that that had not been thought of prior to the interview process (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interviews took place both in

person at Blackfriars Hall (5), and online via Microsoft Teams (5). Each interview was recorded with consent from the participant.

Ten questions were used as the structure of this interview (see Appendix G). They were decided based on the previous literature reviewed regarding student perceptions of sexual harassment policies (see Williams et al., 1994; Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007; Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). The interview typically starting with an introductory question of "what is the first word you think of when you hear the statement: 'University of Oxford's Sexual Harassment Policy'." This question typically opened up room for more open discussions on perceptions of the policy and why participants felt certain ways toward the policy. To break the interview up a bit and combat any fatigue for both the researcher and participant, excerpts of definitions, provided by the harassment policy, were given to interviewees and they were asked to expand upon whether the definitions seemed to be clear and comprehensive enough. The final structured question of every interview was: "is there anything else you would like me to know," in order to allow for participants to either expand and elaborate upon any topics or points discussed previously or introduce topics they felt were not touched upon.

3.6 Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis

Because both qualitative and quantitative data was collected, two forms of analysis were required. Quantitative analysis was utilized for the surveys, which included both a descriptive analysis and independent t-tests. The reliability and validity of this data can be assessed, by looking at the range of data collected and the previous literature. However, as this sample was very small, the internal and external validity of the study can be undermined as there was not enough data to appropriately analyze and draw conclusions from (Faber & Martins Fonseca, 2014). The descriptive analysis indicated commonality in perceptions regarding awareness of the policies within the university setting and how often students believed violations of the policy were occurring and being reported. The rationale behind using independent t-tests is that it allows for independent variables to be run against demographics in order to show if there are any statistically significant differences between demographic groups (Kim & Park, 2019). For the eight hypotheses listed in chapter 2, independent t-tests were run via SPSS because each hypothesis had two categorical variables and one numeric variable.

For hypotheses 1 and 2 the categorical variables that were run were the marginalized backgrounds against each numeric variable (i.e., resources read, resource awareness, feelings of support, feelings of protection, understanding of the harassment policies, and feelings of safety).[6] Hypotheses 3 and 4 looked at the categorical variable of age with participants of 18-24 years old compared to those aged 25 and older for every numeric variable. For hypotheses 5 and 6 undergraduates vs. postgraduates was the categorical variable ran against the numeric variables. Hypotheses 7 and 8 looked at department of study as the categorical variable with Social Sciences and Humanities departments vs. Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences and Medicine departments and every numeric variable. Finally, Hypotheses 9 and 10 also looked at department of study but compared the Social Sciences department to the Humanities department against all numeric variables.

For the interviews, a qualitative approach was taken to analyze the data. This involved transcribing every interview from the participants. The responses were then organized into similar concepts through the process of coding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). All participant responses were coded by hand, separately, but were analyzed for similar themes. Having read the literature and knowing the general culture surrounding sexual harassment at the University of Oxford, I had a vague sense of what themes would emerge, but ultimately, open coding was used for determining key themes (O'Reilly, 2005) Instead of this allowing for the creation my themes from previous knowledge on the topic, themes were instead pulled from the responses themselves (Schutt, 2015, p. 417). This was an important aspect because if I had only followed the themes that I anticipated would arise, I may have focused too heavily on those and missed other themes that could have arisen (Cascio et al., 2019). The interviews were then examined for relationships between concepts and then any conclusions were corroborated by reviewing all transcriptions again for any other explanations and evidence (Schutt, 2015, p. 403). As this study hoped to determine the perceptions of participants, the coding structure began with overarching themes of feelings participants held toward

[6] As stated in the Chapter 2, marginalized backgrounds include those who identify as anything other than heterosexual, white, cis-male, full-time, and/or domestic students and each categorical variable was run separately against each numeric variable listed.

the policy, whether they were positive, negative, or neutral. From here, recurring words and phrases were utilized as the codes for this study to determine the themes presented by the participants (see Appendix H for example).

3.7 Ethical Considerations and Reflections

As this study works directly with human participants, ethical consideration is a necessary component to conducting research. The Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) Best Practice Guidance offers a list of guidelines for the researcher to follow. In this case, BPG 01 "Researcher safety", BPG 06 "Internet-mediated research", BPG 09 "Data collection, protection and management", and BPG 10 "Conducting research interviews" were used to ensure the study was adhering to ethical guidance. Guidance on data protection and research was also made available by the university in order to ensure all data was protected in adherence with the Data Protection Act of 2018 (UK Public General Acts, 2018). After this study received CUREC approval (CIA-22HT-090, see the approval email as Appendix I), the survey became active, and students were able to anonymously complete this. By completing the survey, participants offered implied consent and explained it at the beginning of the survey, meaning that by completing the survey in its entirety, the participant consented to their data being used.

Those students who opted to complete an interview at a later time were required to include an email address at the end of the survey, however as soon as all of the data and emails were fully compiled, the emails (as identifiers) were immediately unlinked from all recorded data. Informed consent was necessary for interviews, meaning that participants were required to sign a document giving their consent to participate in the interview itself, be recorded, were made aware that at any time during the interview they could stop, and they had up to two weeks after an interview to withdraw their data.

From here, interviews took place both in person at Blackfriars Hall, in a private room, and online via Microsoft Teams which uses encrypted software. The benefits of conducting in-person interviews allows for rapport to be established more easily, while the benefits of online interviews allow for greater flexibility with schedules. As the interviews were conducted during the summer months it made sense for an online

interview option to be included as some students had traveled back home for the vacation. However, limitations that need to be considered for online interview was a potential difficulty establish rapport. An ethical consideration for in-person interviews was that of COVID-19 safety procedures and protocols. In order to best adhere to these, interviews were conducted in a well-ventilated room and participants were free to wear a mask if they so desired.

Only audio recordings were collected, and they were all stored on a password-protected computer. Pseudonymization was chosen over complete anonymization for this study as the university itself bears great significance to the study. However, other than the name of the university, nothing identifiable about any of the interview participants was recorded or reported upon. Furthermore, no personal accounts of sexual harassment or assault were to be documented or reported upon, and all interviewees are referred to as “Participant A", “Participant B”, etc. Survey Data would also only be shared in the aggregate form, in order to protect participants’ identities.

As this topic can be difficult to discuss and can sometimes result in the resurfacing unwanted memories, participants were given a trigger warning in the introduction to the survey, in the information sheet for interviewees prior to giving their consent to participate, verbally before the interview start, and were given the resources they had access to through the university. The University of Oxford counselling center contact information was listed in both the introduction to the survey and in the participant information sheet for interviewees.

Finally, my positionality as a researcher brings an interesting insight to this study. My motivation to conduct a study such as this was my own experience researching the federal sexual harassment and discrimination policies in the United States. This sparked an interest in harassment policies within higher education for me and the perceived notions students hold toward them, which, as according to the previous literature, is typically less than favorable (see Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007; Menon, et al., 2009; Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). Upon coming to the University of Oxford and learning of the harassment policy here as well as the growing statistics on sexual harassment and violence presented by the universities SVHSS, it seemed fitting to determine what

perceptions students held here. Being a student who identifies with multiple different underrepresented and minority groups, this has shaped my study to deduce if and how these various backgrounds may interact with the policy. This allowed me to secure a decent grasp on various different student perspectives, and ultimately allowed for a bond of trust to form easily with the interview participants.

4. Findings

In this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative findings will be reported on. Starting with the survey findings, each hypothesis will be discussed and if any statistical significance was found the data analysis. The descriptive statistics collected via the survey will also be reported on in this section. The qualitative analysis of the study will then be discussed starting with reviewing certain responses to questions that were asked of each respondent and ending with the results of the coding that occurred with each interview via grounded theory.

4.1 Survey Findings

Eight hypotheses guided this research: (1) Those from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds would score lower for feelings of support, protection, and safety than those who are not from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds. (2) Those from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds would score higher on resources read and awareness, as well as understanding of harassment policies than those who are not from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds. (3) Those who are aged 18-24 or undergraduates would score lower for feelings of support, protection, and safety than those who are aged 25 and older or postgraduates. (4) Those who are aged 18-24 or undergraduates would score higher on resources read and awareness, as well as understanding of harassment policies than those who are aged 25 and older or postgraduates. (5) Those who study in the mathematical, physical, and life sciences and medicine departments would score lower for feelings of support, protection, and safety than those who study in the social sciences and humanities departments. (6) Those who study in the mathematical, physical, and life sciences and medicine departments would score higher on resources read and awareness, as well as understanding of harassment policies than those who study in the social sciences and humanities departments. (7) Those who study in the social sciences department would score lower for feelings of support, protection, and safety than those who study in the humanities department. (8) Those who study in the social sciences department would score higher on resources read and awareness, as well as understanding of harassment policies than those who study in the humanities department.

The first hypothesis analyzed the relationships of five marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds (sexuality, race, gender, studying status, and fee status) as categorical variables with three numeric variables (feelings of support, protection, and safety). As seen in Table 2, there was only one t-test (studying status vs. feelings of safety) that yielded statistically significant results for this hypothesis (t= -1.283, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$). Finding statistical significance for this test indicates that the mean of full-time enrolled students was significantly lower than that of part-time students which did not support my initial hypothesis. For the second hypothesis, which also utilized the five marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds aforementioned, a t-test was also run for each categorical variable against three numeric variables (resources read and awareness and understanding of harassment policies). Again, there was only one test that yielded statistical significance which was the comparison of means of domestic vs. international students with the resources participants read (t= 0.128, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$) (see Table 2). These results did not support the initial hypothesis that international students would read more resources than domestic students.

Hypothesis three analyzed the relationships of age and degree level as categorical variables with three numeric variables (feelings of support, protection, and safety). For the age of participants, there was statistical significance found for both feelings of support (t= -0.625, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$) and protection (t= -1.855, *df* = 39, $p < 0.01$) (see Table 2). These results indicate that participants aged 18-24 scored lower on feelings of support and protection than those aged 25 and older, supporting the initial hypothesis. When looking at the degree level of participants, statistical significance was found with all three numeric variables, feelings of support (t= 1.473, *df* = 39, $p < 0.001$), protection (t= 1.405, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$), and safety (t= 2.865, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$), as seen in Table 2. The initial hypothesis was supported in this scenario, as undergraduates scored significantly lower than postgraduates for feelings of support, protection, and safety. For the fourth hypothesis, which also utilized age and degree level, a t-test was also run for both categorical variables against three numeric variables (resources read and awareness and understanding of harassment policies). Starting with the age variable, there was no statistical significance found when tested against the numeric variables (*p* = NS). However, as seen in Table 2, there were statistically significant results for degree level and resources read (t= -0.966, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$) and degree level and resource

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and p-value of Participant Demographics with Established Numeric Variables

	Resources Read			Resource Awareness			Feelings of Support			Feelings of Protection			Understanding of Policy			Feelings of Safety		
	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***
Race			**0.086**			**0.435**			**0.628**			**0.873**			**0.247**			**0.889**
White	3.23	1.77		6.23	2.30		6.93	1.84		5.97	2.09		6.28	1.44		5.70	1.64	
Non-White	2.73	1.01		5.82	1.47		6.09	2.07		4.64	1.57		6.09	0.94		5.27	1.56	
Gender			**0.970**			**0.298**			**0.982**			**0.340**			**0.433**			**0.819**
Male	3.00	1.73		6.00	1.90		7.20	1.93		6.20	1.97		6.36	1.50		6.00	1.81	
Female/Other	3.15	1.57		6.19	1.93		6.42	1.88		5.27	2.03		6.15	1.22		5.35	1.47	
Sexuality			**0.314**			**0.510**			**0.715**			**0.380**			**0.149**			**0.567**
Heterosexual	3.00	1.52		5.92	2.24		6.92	1.96		5.92	2.02		6.20	1.26		5.85	1.62	
Other	3.27	1.79		6.47	1.85		6.33	1.84		5.07	2.02		6.27	1.44		5.13	1.55	
Age			**0.236**			**0.477**			*			**			**0.921**			**0.74**
18-24	3.07	1.77		6.14	2.29		6.59	2.13		5.24	2.26		6.00	1.41		5.38	1.72	
25+	3.17	1.19		6.08	1.62		7.00	1.28		6.50	0.90		6.75	0.87		6.08	1.24	
Department			**0.467**			**0.506**			**0.607**			**0.338**			**0.290**			**0.351**
SS/H	3.03	1.59		6.08	2.05		6.64	1.84		5.42	1.84		6.03	1.18		5.58	1.57	
MPLS/M	3.60	1.82		6.40	2.70		7.20	2.59		7.00	3.00		7.60	1.52		5.60	2.07	
Degree Level			*			*			***			*			**0.085**			*
Undergrad	3.56	2.24		6.44	3.17		5.89	2.98		4.78	2.95		6.33	2.12		4.33	1.94	
Postgrad	2.97	1.40		6.03	1.75		6.94	1.48		5.84	1.69		6.19	1.01		5.94	1.34	
Enrollment Status			**0.099**			**0.400**			**0.053**			**0.95**			**0.245**			*
Full-Time	3.15	1.63		6.15	2.15		6.69	1.96		5.59	2.09		6.24	1.34		5.51	1.62	
Part-Time	2.00	0.00		5.50	0.71		7.00	0.00		6.00	0.00		6.00	0.00		7.00	0.00	
Fee Status			*			**0.202**			**0.192**			**0.375**			**0.902**			**0.153**
Domestic	3.13	1.94		6.21	2.50		6.71	2.18		5.54	2.21		6.22	1.44		5.42	1.77	
International	3.06	1.03		6.00	1.41		6.71	1.53		5.71	1.83		6.24	1.15		5.82	1.38	

* = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$

Table 3
Mean, Standard Deviation, and p-value of Participant Department with Established Numeric Variables

	Resources Read			Resource Awareness			Feelings of Support			Feelings of Protection			Understanding of Policy			Feelings of Safety		
	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***	Mean	*SD*	***p***
Department			**0.082**			**0.239**			**0.083**			*			**0.926**			**0.071**
Soc. Sci.	2.70	0.95		6.20	1.03		6.80	1.32		5.50	0.97		6.67	0.87		6.50	1.08	
Humanities	3.15	1.78		6.04	2.34		6.58	2.02		5.38	2.10		5.81	1.20		5.23	1.61	

* = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$

awareness (t= -0.517, *df* = 39, $p < 0.05$). These results partially supported the initial hypothesis that undergraduate participants would read more and have a greater awareness of resources available to them than postgraduate participants.

The fifth hypothesis required t-tests to be run for the department participants belong to (i.e., social sciences and humanities vs. mathematical, physical, and life sciences and medicine) and feelings of support, protection, and safety. However, there was no statistical significance found between the means when departmental status was tested against the numeric variables (p = NS). Hypothesis six also looked to determine if these same categorical variables of departmental status yielded statistical significance against resources read and awareness and understanding of harassment policies. This again yielded no statistical significance (p = NS), indicating that there were not significant differences among the means between departments. The last two hypotheses (seven and eight) also looked at divisions amongst departments, but more specifically at social sciences and humanities participants to determine if there were any differences. For hypothesis seven, which used feelings of support, protection, and safety as the numeric variables, statistical significance was found for feelings of protection (t= 0.166, *df* = 34, $p < 0.05$). This result indicates that those who study within the department of social science feel higher levels of protection than those who study within the humanities departments. The eighth hypothesis utilized the three numeric variables of resources read and awareness and understanding of harassment policies and no statistical significance was found (p = NS). These results do not support either of the initial hypotheses.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Two questions were asked as descriptive statistics to determine how often participants believed there were violations of the harassment policy and how of these cases how often they believed students reported their findings. It was found that (as seen in

Figures 3 and 4) the majority of participants believed that between 21-60% of students experience sexual harassment while attending the University of Oxford, with 34.1% (14) indicating 21-40% and 41.5% (17) choosing between 41-60%. This was followed by 14.6% (6) believing 0-20% experience sexual harassment, and 9.8% (4) selecting 61-80%. It is also relevant to note that no participants indicated that they believed 81-100% of the students at the University of Oxford experienced sexual harassment. The second question showed that the majority of participants at 80.5% (33) believed that only 0-20% of students who had experienced sexual harassment would be inclined to report it. This was followed by 12.2% (5) indicating 21-40% and 4.9% (2) indicating 41-60%. Interestingly enough, no participants chose the 61-80% margin, but 2.4% (1) indicated 81-100% of students would report a violation of sexual harassment.

Another descriptive statistic collected showed if participants knew that the university had a harassment policy as well as their respective colleges with a simple "Yes" or "No" (as seen in Figures 5 and 6).[7] Furthermore students who belonged to a college that did not have their own policy were asked to select "Not

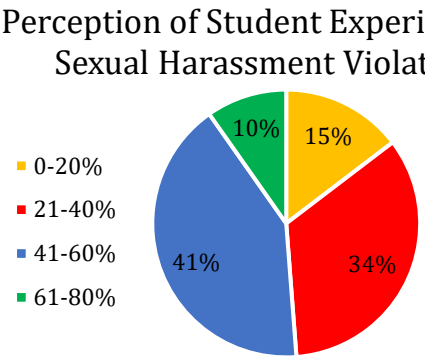


Fig 3: Perception of experiences of sexual harassment

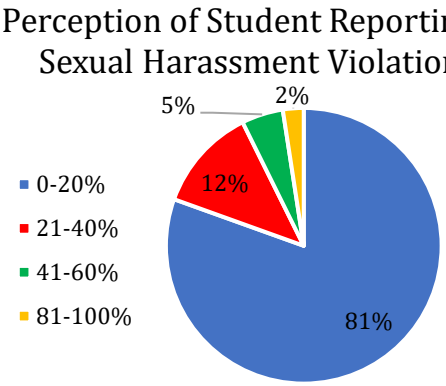


Fig 4: Perception of reporting of sexual harassment violations

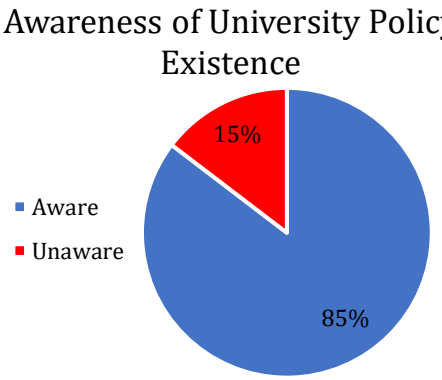


Fig 5: Knowledge of university harassment policy's existence

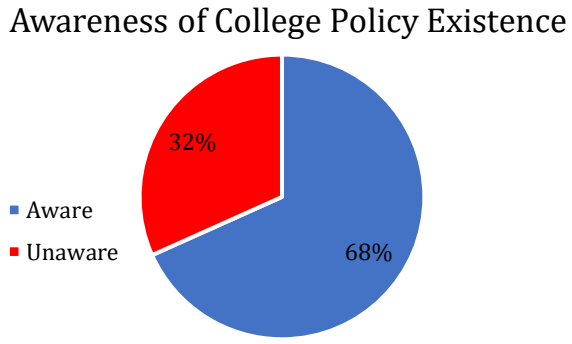


Fig 6: Knowledge of college harassment policy's existence

[7] As stated previously, five colleges and PPHs (Campion Hall, Harris Manchester College, Kellogg College, St Cross College, and St Stephen's House) do not have a designated policy for sexual harassment and instead refer their students back to the university policy.

Applicable. While completing the survey, students were asked to self-identify their (1) resources read, (2) resource awareness, (3) feelings of support, (4) feelings of protection, (5) understanding of the harassment policies, and (6) feelings of safety. Category (1), resources read, was determined by having participants answer two statements about how much of their university and college policies they have read with a scale. The answer choices for this started at (1) "None of it", followed by (2) Some of it, (3) Most of it, and finally (4) "All of it." The second category built off this by looking at the same two statements utilized in category one and a third statement asking if they knew where they could report a violation of the sexual harassment policy. This was determined using a scale that had the answer options of (1) "Strongly Disagree", (2) "Disagree", (3) "Neither Agree nor Disagree", (4) "Agree", and (5) "Strongly Agree" The other four categories went through 8 statements that predominantly used the same scale from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (5) "Strongly Agree."[8]

4.2 Interview Findings

The ten interviews conducted granted insight into why participants held certain perceptions toward the sexual harassment policy at the University of Oxford. Each interviewee was asked at least 10 questions, with follow-up questions being asked where needed. To start each interview, two questions were asked to have participants identify the first word that came to mind when they think of the University of Oxford's Harassment Policy in regard to sexual harassment, and then to explain their reasoning behind this choice. As seen in Table 4, three words (women, bureaucratic, and uncertainty) were stated by two participants each, and the remaining four words (ineffective, slow, there, and vague) were all singular responses. What is interesting to note is that those who chose the same word, also offered similar reasonings for their selection of it. Some reasonings also overlapped between words, such as uncertainty and there, which highlighted the awareness of existence, but minimal to no knowledge of the actual policy itself. For the remainder of the interview, participants did not include any instances in which they viewed the university policy in a positive manner. Instead, the interviewees offered responses that were either purely neutral, purely

[8] For the seventh statement, which explored feelings of safety, the numerical values of the scale were swapped in order to maintain consistency in what the statement was answering (i.e. (1) "Strongly Agree" to (5) "Strongly Disagree".

Table 4
First Word Thought of Regarding University of Oxford Sexual Harassment Policy and Reasoning

Word Chosen	Occurrence	Reasoning
Women	2	Disproportionately affected by harassment; policy arose because of this
Bureaucratic	2	Paperwork with no support offered; a lot of variables at play and a long process with a policy that is unhelpful
Uncertainty	2	Aware of existence, but unaware of specifics; empty promises, convoluted and difficult to understand
Ineffective	1	Cases heard of all the time, but seems as though policy may not actually be helpful
Slow	1	Procedurally responses from university are slow, with minimal help available during summer months
There	1	Knows of existence and could find policy, if necessary, but is unaware of specifics
Vague	1	Difficult to find anything explicitly on sexual harassment, nothing tangible or clearly signposted for use

negative, or a mixture of the two. When asked if the policy or procedures had any impact on the views participants held toward the institution, 50% (5) said yes (negative response), 30% (3) said yes and no (negative and neutral responses), and 20% (2) said no (neutral response) (refer to Figure 7). All interview participants also offered ways in which they felt the policy could be improved upon, either through resource accessibility or policy amendments which will be reported on in the next section of this dissertation, the discussion.

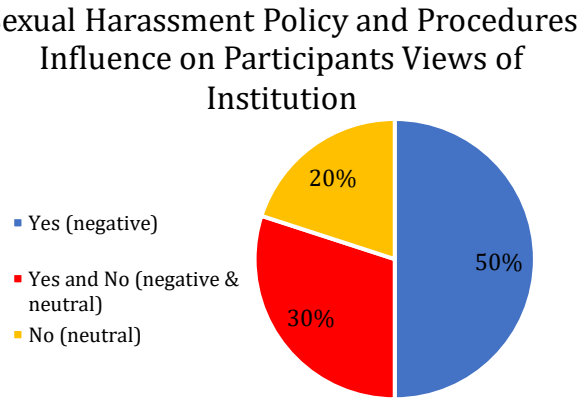


Fig 7: Reporting of whether sexual harassment policy and procedures influence participants views of the institution

4.2.1 Feelings of Neutrality

Based off the findings seen in Figure 7, the reporting of neutrality toward the institution were present for a variety of reasons. The first being that some

participants felt as though the policy itself is generic and does not offer anything out of the ordinary compared to other universities:

> I don't think [the policy] has [shaped my views on the institution] ...I've read multiple policies from different universities and it's pretty general. (Participant A)

Another, more prominent reasoning with participants was given for neutrality toward the institution. In regard to the policy and procedures it is clear that many of the participants had not read any of the policy or even had confirmation that it existed until these interviews, so it seemingly could not have impacted their perception. This was demonstrated by Participant G:

> For the sake of comparison [at my undergrad] I also was not aware of what the sexual harassment policy was or how you would go about doing it, so this is more, I feel, my own ignorance rather than the university specifically being worse than other universities in this case, so no it has not really impacted how I think about the university.

A common sentiment shared by all of the interviewees was a lack of awareness. Participants may have been aware that there was a policy for sexual harassment in existence, but seven out of ten had not read any of the policy and all participants felt as though most students at the university would not have ready any of this at all. Furthermore, there was a typical feeling amongst all participants that students would not look for this policy unless an actual problem arose. This thought, expressed by Participant B best encapsulates this:

> If something happened that made [a student] feel like they needed to access this policy then I would hope that they would be able to find it and contact the right person, but other than that I don't see any students on the day of just googling the university harassment policy.

Even with this, some participants indicated that they still may not read the policy in full if an issue arose as they would look to a trusted faculty member or reach out for help to the university initially as it would be easier. Participant D stated: "If I encounter something that I need help with, I don't think I would necessarily read all of the policy before I go contact them or anything." This was reiterated by other participants, as reading the policy, just for the sake of reading it, was not at the forefront of any student's mind. The implications for these feelings will be further discussed in the discussion section.

4.2.2 Feelings of Negativity

A lack of centrality regarding the policies at the university arose as a prominent feeling of negativity. As the greater university policy is used for instances when sexual harassment occurs between students that attend different colleges or in departmental situations, the college policies handle all matters of harassment which occur within. While it is understandable that colleges would have their own harassment policies, there were some concerns that arose with participants:

> I think [cases of sexual harassment] should always be done centrally...there may be some bias in the operations of the college that you would not find if you went to the central university. (Participant G)

And as there is not currently a central point, this leads to further confusion and what Participant E called the "ping-pong effect" of cases of harassment being bounced around to various offices. According to participants of this study, this lack of centrality can make matters very difficult when attempting to finding any information regarding these policies and support:

> When it comes to anything involving sexual harassment and assault allegations and any sort of policy around it, it tends to have a lot of fluff that comes with it...but when it comes to actually finding that information, they make it very convoluted and very difficult. (Participant I)

Furthermore, the minimal promotion of the policy, procedure, and resources available seemed to be a point of frustration with all participants. While the university has made these all available to students, participants felt that there is very little sent out to make students aware of the policy and resources throughout the year:

> I think it would be really great if the hyperlinks actually worked...I think trying to streamline [the policy and resources] a bit better would be a great first step and like I said having access to the information they claim to have would be great (Participant I)

However, although there is minimal promotion on the universities part, participants did not feel that this was necessarily with malintent. Rather, it is assumed by participants that issues such as this have been simply overlooked by the University of Oxford or that they are not particularly concerned with problems of this nature:

> I do not believe that they are particularly forthcoming with [the policy, procedure, or resources available], but I do not think they are hiding it either. (Participant H)

Another point of contention amongst the participants highlighted issues they felt are ever present regarding the institutional response to complaints of sexual harassment. With this, the concept of the university guarding its own reputation became a recurrent theme. It is important to note that all participants indicated that they still had confidence with their college if they were to progress with proceedings within:

> In my personal life and the community that I have I feel pretty safe knowing who I would go to, I don't know if that is a result of this policy though, I think that is more of a result of the individuals I have met and who I know I can trust. (Participant F)

Yet despite this sentiment, there is a distinct lack of confidence amongst participants if the university were to conduct any of the procedure:

> It sort of Gives the impression of an institution that doesn't always cause trouble, that sometimes prioritizes its own reputation over the best interest of the students involved. (Participant E)

The next feeling of negativity that arose were safety concerns amongst participants. Although there was no immediate concern that the university is dangerous in and of itself, there was apprehension that there would be little done to protect or support students if and when a situation arose. This lack of confidence in this policy was then translated into decreased feelings of safety due to the perceived inaction of the university, explained by participants as a need to protect its reputation:

> The average student probably doesn't feel safer, but I think that that is a result of knowing that the policy exists but then they have also seen the policy not really upheld or ignored...just because the policy Is there or just because the university says one thing that doesn't necessarily mean that they will act that way. (Participant F)

> No not between colleges, no, the porters as I said just seem to care more about reputation. (Participant E)

According to majority of the interviewees, the policy and procedures are extremely confusing to read and manage. The vagueness of the policy, as well as the document itself lacking comprehensive definitions in relation to sexual harassment, results in a policy that participants are unhappy with overall. Moreso, this leads to a feeling

amongst participants that this policy would not be helpful if a situation arose in which they needed to utilize it:

> Not super helpful I think it's too vague to be materially a helpful policy, it was a bare minimum policy when I read it. (Participant J)

The structure of this policy was not only confusing to understand but is set up in a way which was not conducive to finding information specific to sexual harassment, as the current policy includes various forms of harassing behaviors. This could lead to further confusion and uncertainty, especially when dealing with students who have just gone through a potentially tragic event, as outlined by Participant A:

> ...because people, well, if they experience [sexual harassment] they are going to be in an emotional state and I don't think they will look for a harassment policy, they would try to find what applies to them.

Participants also exhibited comments of disillusion with the University of Oxford. It appears that participants initially exhibited a strong feeling of attachment toward the name of the university due to the prestige and believed that there could be no faltering. However, after arriving and witnessing issues occurring within the institution firsthand, participants fell out of the illusion that had once captivated them:

> I definitely was carrying a certain halo that maybe Oxford would be better than most of the other institutions, but it's not. (Participant D)

> I was surprised when I learned many people believe [the policy] doesn't work...so based on what I have heard it does not work. (Participant C)

With these strong feelings of negativity conveyed by every participant, it poses what is potentially a structural issue with the policy and procedures. Moreover, participant's views toward the institutions enaction of this policy and the offering of support to students has shown little faith amongst the student body. While these sentiments were coupled with feelings of neutrality, there is a distinct and glaring presence of far more negative attitudes toward this policy and the institution itself. The next chapter will offer further explanation on these results, as well as implications for the University of Oxford and its policy.

5. Discussions

This chapter will look to analyze the findings of the quantitative and qualitative results. Starting with the quantitative analysis, we will look at the results in relation to research question two and also go through the analysis of all the hypotheses and descriptive statistics. For the qualitative analysis, research question one and three will be explored in relation to the results from the interviews. Finally, this section will conclude by highlighting the implications the policy and greater university.

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative results yielded 10 statistically significant results as stated in Chapter Four. An analysis of resources read, resource awareness, feelings of protection and feelings of safety compared to undergraduate versus graduate students led to statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Feelings of support for this same group of participants also yielded statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). Analysis ran against full-time vs. part-time students with the feelings of safety index resulted in statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). The following indexes and categorical variables also led to statistical significance: domestic vs. international students and resources read ($p < 0.05$), age and feelings of support ($p < 0.05$), age and feelings of protection ($p < 0.01$), and social science vs. humanities and feelings of protection ($p < 0.05$). All other tests run did not offer statistical significance, meaning that the null hypothesis must be accepted.

5.1.1 Analysis of Results

The results for participants when grouped into degree levels offered the most statistical significance which supported the previously discussed literature (see Bloom et al., 2021; Rosenthal et al., 2016). As this grouping indicated consistent results with the literature, and the tests allowed for the rejection the null hypothesis for nearly every numeric variable tested, it appears that these results are both reliable and valid for this group of participants (Mertens, 2012; Bryman, 2011). However, because there were very few participants to begin with this analysis should be considered only terms of this group of participants, as none of these results are generalizable (Schutt, 2015). The results for the age of participants also followed the trends of the literature, as students who were older felt higher levels of support and protection than those who were younger. As this follows trends of pervious literature (see Schneider, 1987; Bloom et al.,

2021) it is indicative of the fact that these results hold some validity, however, as only two of the numeric variables yielded any significance these results may have less reliability than that of the degree level results. Similarly, the remaining results that yielded statistical significance either did not support any of the previous literature or there was no literature found to base the results on (see National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; Clancy et al., 2017) indicating no validity or reliability with these measures. Furthermore, the results that yielded no significance did not adhere to the previous literature either (see Street et al., 2007; Lombardo & Bustelo, 2020; Klein & Martin, 2021; Mennicke et al., 2021; Raj et al., 2021). Yet, as this sample size was extremely small, it is understandable that there were not more trends observed within the data set. Any trends observed in this set of data are specific to this group of participants analyzed and despite the trends of degree level and age offering validity and reliability, it cannot be generalized back to the larger populace.

The results of the descriptive statistics indicate a general awareness of the university policy and participants college policy. However, less participants demonstrated knowledge that their college policy existed, which may indicate that there is not enough discussion surrounding college policies upon arrival for students. Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate how often they believed violations of the sexual harassment occur. The statistics show that 51% of participants believe that 41-80% of students have experienced a violation of harassment, yet 81% of participants suggested that only 0-20% of those who have faced a violation report it. This is concerning, because allow these statistics follow trends amongst other surveys conducted in the UK (see Revolt, 2018; Steele et al., 2021, NUS, 2011), there is a large and glaring belief that there is a significant amount of underreporting occurring.

5.1.2 RQ2: Impacts of Identity

Research question two hoped to explore how identity impacted views toward the institution. This research question informed the structure of the survey and how to determine if there were any student backgrounds, consistent with the literature, which achieved statistical significance. Sadly, there was very little to indicate a strong impact on identity in relation to the perceptions held toward the harassment policy and procedures at the University of Oxford. As degree level and age were the only two

categories which yielded valid results, it is interesting to note that none of the bigger indicators, such as gender or race, which typically do yield statistical significance as seen in the literature (see Osuna-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Raj et al., 2021), yielded nothing. This preliminary evidence also indicates a need for further exploration at the University of Oxford. This can be achieved by incorporating larger proportions of those who identify as part of the marginalized and underrepresented groups (identified in Chapter Two) and expanding the size of the study to indicate if there are any other trends which demonstrate the impacts on perceptions due to identity.

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of this study observed four different trends: the words participants thought of when hearing the term "Oxford Sexual Harassment Policy", whether participants believed that their views of the institution have been shaped by what they know/have heard of the policy, feelings of neutrality, and feelings of negativity. These trends offer a descriptive outlook on the cohort of interview participants. The following section will observe how these trends answered research question one, how student participants perceived the policy, and research question three, why the participants perceive the policy in this way.

5.2.1 RQ1: Perceptions of the Policy

The perceptions participants held toward this policy fell into two categories, neutral and negative. As the interviews were coded it became apparent that none of the interviewees held positive views toward the inner workings of the university policy or procedures, but there were some instances of positive outlooks toward their own college policies. This indicates a lack of cohesion and consideration between the colleges and universities handlings of violations of sexual harassment. Furthermore, many participants demonstrated how the. As students continued to share their thoughts it was clear that the feelings of neutrality held were predominantly due to lack of exposure to the policy and procedures, as well as minimal exposure to instances of these policies being utilized. Overall, these perceptions held true with all participants and indicate a need for further research at the University of Oxford to be conducted in order to determine any common themes or beliefs among the entire university population.

5.2.2 RQ3: Explanation of Perceptions

Participants of this study showed so many negative feelings toward the university predominantly due to the universities lack of promotion of this policy and the resources available to students. Because many of the interviewees believed there were no resources available to them and that the policy is difficult to find and confusing to comprehend, the feelings of negativity toward this policy and procedures can be explained. Simply put, based off of the minimal attention students felt the university put toward this policy and violations, they held the belief that the university was not inclined to offer assistance in order to protect its own reputation. This is an especially concerning sentiment that was held by most participants, as it indicates a lack of trust in the university and its enactment of policies.

Students also communicated that the stories they had heard in their own colleges, departments, and through media had significantly impacted why they held these perceptions toward the university:

> Not exactly the policy directly, but it's more people who I know whose experiences of that policy, which is to be more negative...news media has shaped it a little bit, so it's not exactly about the harassment policy directly but more about harassment in the university, again giving the precedent of shielding those in positions of responsibility or of reputational importance to the university. (Participant E)

> I didn't have huge expectations for any university policy from the beginning...I had heard a couple of things and seen some tweets about the university failing students and hadn't treated students well when it came to policy, so that coupled with my already predisposition toward university on the whole. (Participant F)

When the stories that these participants are hearing are predominantly negative (see Nikolic, 2021; Davies & Jazeera, 2021; Adams, 2022; Alencar, 2022), it is more likely than not to impact the feelings they hold and further explains why the perceptions of these participants only highlighted aspects of neutrality and negativity.

5.3 Implications for the Policy and University

Trainings on sexual harassment were deemed as a necessary addition to the university by all participants. It was widely believed that all students, faculty, and staff at the

university be required to participate. Interviewees also believed that instituting, at a minimum, online courses as they believed they may be useful, but most expressed that a university institution of seminars on sexual harassment and violence would be the most beneficial:

> I almost feel like mandating an online module about consent and harassment isn't even enough...I think it needs to be address in a more comprehensive social way where its actually talked about and it's not just a module you click through...I think everyone should have to do a training, bare minimum everyone needs to do an online module. (Participant F)

> At the end of the day what do you have to lose from knowing more about the harassment policy and how to use it, I think anybody that thinks that it would be a nuisance if [trainings were] mandated isn't getting the gravity of why it's important for it to exist. (Participant I)

Participants also offered insight into what they would consider to be policy improvements:

> I think making the definitions clearer and actually including maybe a list of things that are considered to be harassment or inappropriate behavior, but also, I feel like it should be easier to find, and it should be available or talked about more especially in the first couple of weeks of term. (Participant A)

> I feel like if there were maybe more concrete examples that could help with the vague sort of language that is used. You know 'inappropriate body language' can be a lot of things, so just something to exemplify it further. (Participant B)

> I think it would be good to separate out the kinds of harassment in some way. Even if it was just headings under a communal harassment policy and each example of harassment has its own section on what that type means. I think there are so few people reporting harassment and very little success in achieving anything as a result of reporting it that I think probably more specificity and more information in the policy is better rather than less (Participant J)

By offering clearer definitions, more examples of sexual harassment, clarification on the procedural aspect in cases of sexual harassment and separating out either a section or entirely separate document for violations of sexual harassment and violence, interviewees believed that this would significantly improve the university policy.

Promotion of the policy and resources was also a major implication for this study. As nearly every participant explained that they were either unaware of the policy and resources, could not find anything due to faulty links, or that it seemed as though the

university was purposefully not forthcoming with this information, it is imperative that the University of Oxford address this by actively promoting these resources. As stated in Chapter Four, the university and colleges lack cohesion when it comes to their handlings of the policy. By further discussions being had at an administrative level to determine what is working in college policies and comparing that to what seems to be failing in the university's, should allow for useful and comprehensive amendments to be made in order to offer more centralized support.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This study investigated the perceptions of the sexual harassment policy held by students at the University of Oxford. In response to an increase in documented cases at the University of Oxford and current literature indicating a need for clearer policies and follow an increased administrative presence in enacting these policies, three research questions were identified. The questions proposed hoped to determine how students perceived this policy and why and if their identity shapes these feelings. In order to see if the patterns identified in the literature hold true, a mixed-methods approach was taken with a survey of 41 participants and an interview process which included 10 participants. The focus of the survey enabled a comparison of various student demographics to numeric variables measuring feelings toward and awareness of the sexual harassment policy. Interviews were then focused more specifically on indicating why students held certain views towards this same policy.

The findings of the quantitative aspect, regarding perceptions between undergraduate and graduate students, supported the previous literature. As it was found that graduate students, were both more comfortable with this policy, yet less aware of what it entails which is directly supported by literature from Schneider (1987), Bloom et al., (2021), and Rosenthal et al (2016). The previous literature was also supported hen observing the statistically significant results with age, which indicated that the older a student was the higher their feelings of support and protection. The other two statistically significant results (enrollment status and fee status) were not supported by the literature previously reviewed. For the qualitative aspect of this study, four conclusions can be drawn from the data collected: (1) both a centralized policy and a college policy are necessary, but both are overwhelmingly confusing for students; (2) there are far more negative feelings amongst participants towards the universities handling of proceedings than neutral or positive; (3) there is a desire for mandatory trainings and seminars surrounding sexual harassment and violence; and finally, (4) the University of Oxford is insufficiently facilitating the promotion of this policy and the resources available.

There are multiple implications for this research. The first indicates that the university should require some form of trainings or seminars to be conducted for both undergraduate and graduate students in order to better inform the population of the

policy and procedures, as well as inform them of what constitutes harassing behaviors. These trainings have been supported by an article published in the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, and states that as long as there is a continuous effort made to combat sexual harassment and the culture surrounding it within these environments, then trainings will be effective (Campbell Quick & McFadyen, 2017). The second implication for this research advises that the university should do more to promote this policy and resources available to students such as the Sexual Violence and Harassment Support Service, the counseling center, or the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor. Promoting these resources and the policy would better ensure that students have the confidence to use these services and report any misconduct that may occur. The third implication suggests that the harassment policy and procedures should include more examples of sexual harassment and a clear subsection for sexual harassment procedures to aid in both clarity and comprehension. Finally, the last implication for this study indicates that there is a need for greater discussion and cohesion betwixt the university and colleges to fully understand the needs of the greater populace at the University of Oxford.

6.2 Limitations

While this research contributes to the understanding of student perceptions of sexual harassment, there were some limitations that were presented during the research and analysis process. The first limitation was the sampling method, while convenience sampling was easiest, it did not allow for any generalizations to be made of the entire student population. Also, since this sample only contained 41 participants, there was a limitation with the response rate as well pulling into question the validity of any results gathered. Furthermore, those who participated in this study may already have biases towards this topic. This may have resulted in skewed results as participants were more likely to answer the questionnaire if they already had strong feelings toward the sexual harassment policy and procedures. A final limitation would be the time constraints in which the data needed to be collected and analyzed. As this study was not approved until late May of 2022, it granted limited time for data collection which over a longer period of time could have yielded a larger population of participants for the survey. In order to address these issues, further research should be conducted.

6.3 Future Research

The results of this study should be further examined by including higher percentages of students who identify as members of marginalized or underrepresented groups (i.e., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, enrollment status, etc.). This could be achieved by oversampling these populations, through a disproportionate stratified random sampling method. By conducting sampling with this method, larger proportions of typically underrepresented populations would be surveyed (Schutt, 2015). This sampling method would also allow for generalizability back to the entire population. Furthermore, this approach to sampling grants a greater understanding to answering the second research question which hoped to identify how student's backgrounds impact their views on sexual harassment policies. This study also looked into many demographics in relation to the numeric variables (i.e., feelings of protection, resources read, etc.), and found statistical significance for various hypotheses, but these results are not applicable to the greater population. Furthermore, as the survey sample only included 41 participants, the validity of any statistically significant answers cannot be assumed. As a result, a much larger study should also be conducted in order to further understand the perceptions of sexual harassment at a university.

A further recommendation for research would be the inclusion of surveying and interviewing faculty, staff, and particularly administrative bodies. As this population is in fact the one enacting and enforcing these policies, it would be relevant to know what views they hold of them. Research from the Journal of Trauma, Violence, and Abuse also indicates that over time there has been little changed administratively to further enforce these policies since their inception or to offer more support for victims of sexual harassment (Klein & Martin, 2021). Interviewing the population directly responsible for both of these inactions may offer insight into the dynamics of this process at a policy and procedural level. This study could also be expanded upon by incorporating a comparative aspect either between universities within the same country, or by looking at universities across the globe. This would enable researchers to determine what, if there are any, differences, and similarities there are across not only institutions, but countries and regions.

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Appendix A: Email Template for Survey Distribution

Dear _____,

My name is [redacted] and I am reading for an MSc Education [redacted] here at Oxford. I am conducting a dissertation on the perceptions of sexual harassment and violence policies at the University and colleges from a student perspective, looking to see how a students' identity may shape the way they perceive these policies and hopefully determine why they perceive the policies in this way.

I am hoping that as you are the [MCR/JCR] President that you may be able to help me distribute my study. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the University of Oxford saw a 12% increase in referrals to their Sexual Harassment and violence support service despite having the year shortened due to the pandemic.[9] Because of this increase, it seems only fitting to engage with students more with their perceptions of this policy and how it could be improved upon. This being said, would you be willing to distribute my flyer by email to the students at your college? If so, please let me know and I will send another email with the flyer and link attached.

Thank you,

[redacted]

[9] Information retrieved from University of Oxford Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service Annual Report 2019-2020

Appendix B: Email Template for Interview Follow-Up

Dear _____,

My name is [redacted] and I am reading for an MSc Education [redacted] here at Oxford. My dissertation project explores student's perceptions of the sexual harassment policies at the University and colleges.

Thank you for filling in the survey and for indicating your interest in participating in the interview portion of this study. If you are still interested in participating, please let me know in a response to this email. If so, I will send another email with dates and times the interview can take place. These will happen either virtually over Microsoft Teams or in-person at Blackfriars Hall depending on what you are most comfortable with and will be recorded for transcription purposes. Your identity and answers will be pseudonymized and remain anonymous in the reporting of the finding.

Thank you,

[redacted]

Interested in participating in a research study?

Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies

I am an MSc Education [redacted] student looking for volunteers, aged 18 and older to complete a survey looking at how students perceive the sexual harassment and violence policy at the University of Oxford, how their identity shapes this perception, and why they perceive it this way. Participants must be students at the University of Oxford. You are invited to participate in an online survey, with the opportunity to indicate whether you would like to further participate in interviews at a later date. You would be asked to complete a 27 question survey that should take no longer than 15-20 minutes.

If you are interested and would like more information please contact [redacted] or scan **the QR-code** to complete the survey. There is no obligation to take part in this study.

Appendix D: Survey

Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies

Page 1: Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies

Please only complete this survey once.

My name is [redacted] and I am reading for an MSc in Education [redacted] I am conducting my MSc dissertation project on student perceptions of sexual harassment policies. Participation is completely voluntary, and you are allowed to skip any questions or withdraw from participating at any time. If you choose to withdraw or skip any questions, your data will not be used in the final analysis. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire to ensure your privacy. Once this data is collected, I will be the only person with access to it and it will be stored securely on my password protected computer. You must be 18 years or older to participate and a student at the University of Oxford.

Completion of this questionnaire represents consent to participate in this research study. Data will only be shared in cumulative form, and your identity will remain confidential. The university name will remain identifiable in the final reporting of this data. If you would like to withdraw your completed survey, please contact me with specific details of your survey so as to correctly identify you, up to two weeks after completion.

[redacted]
Email: [redacted]

This survey may trigger upsetting memories to surface for participants or cause anxiety due to the discussion of sexual harassment policies. If this occurs, please inform me and refrain from completing the study. If you are in need of

University Counselling Service
Tel: 01865 270300
Email: counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk

Page 2: Demographics

1. Please indicate your Race/Ethnicity (choose all that apply). ✱ *Required*

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Other

1.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

2. Please inidcate your gender identity. ✱ *Required*

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-Binary
- ○ Transgender Male
- ○ Transgender Female
- ○ Other

2.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

3. Please indicate your sexual orientation. ✱ *Required*

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Other

3.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

4. Please indicate the degree you're currently studying for. ✱ *Required*

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate

5. Please indicate whether you are a full-time or part-time student. ✱ *Required*

- Full-Time
- Part-Time

6. Please indicate whether you are a domestic or international student. ✱ *Required*

- Domestic
- International

7. Please indicate which academic division you are a part of. ✱ *Required*

- ○ Humanities Division
- ○ Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division
- ○ Medical Sciences Division
- ○ Social Sciences Division

8. Please indicate if you are a member of one of these colleges: **Campion Hall, Harris Manchester College, Kellogg College, St Cross College, St Stephen's House, or Worcester College** ✱ *Required*

- ○ Yes, I am a member of one of these six colleges
- ○ No, I am not a member of one of these colleges

9. What is your age? ✱ *Required*

- ○ 18-24 years old
- ○ 25-34 years old
- ○ 35-44 years old
- ○ 45-54 years old
- ○ 55-64 years old
- ○ 65-74 years old
- ○ 75 years or older

Page 3: Survey

Read the statements and mark the choice that best corresponds with your answer.

10. I am aware that the University of Oxford has a sexual harassment policy. * *Required*

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

11. I have read the University of Oxford sexual harassment policy. * *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	None of it (1)	Some of it (2)	Most of it (3)	All of it (4)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. I am aware that my college has a sexual harassment policy. * *Required*

More info

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not Applicable

13. I have read my college's sexual harassment policy. * *Required*

More info

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	None of it (1)	Some of it (2)	Most of it (3)	All of it (4)	Not Applicable
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. I know where I can report a violation of the sexual harassment policy. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. I would be supported by my college if I were to report a violation of the sexual harassment policy. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. I would be supported by the university if I were to report a violation of the sexual harassment policy. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. I believe the University of Oxford sexual harassment policy protects all students. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. I believe my college's sexual harassment policy protects all students. ✱ *Required*

More info

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Not Applicable
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. I believe violations of the sexual harassment policies **are common**. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. The University of Oxford's sexual harassment policy is easy to understand. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. My college's sexual harassment policy is easy to understand. ✱ *Required*

More info

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Not Applicable
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. I feel safer knowing these policies exist. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Answer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Page 4: Further Information

23. _____ of students have experienced a violation of the sexual harassment policy during their time enrolled at the University of Oxford. ✱ *Required*

- 0-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

24. Of these students, _____ have reported this violation to the university or their college. ✱ *Required*

- 0-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

25. Please indicate if you would be willing to partake in an interview at a later date. ✱ *Required*

- Yes, I would be willing to.
- No, I would not be willing to.

26. If yes, please include an email you are willing to be contacted through.

Please enter a valid email address.

Page 5: Comments and Feedback

27. Please feel free to share any comments or feedback you have here.

Page 6: Final page

Thank you!

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet

DEPARTMENT CONTACT DETAILS
[redacted]
Oxford University telephone number: [redacted]
Oxford University email address: [redacted]

Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: [redacted]

Introductory paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Why is this research being conducted?

The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions held by students surrounding the formal sexual harassment and violence policy at the University of Oxford (including colleges), why the policies are perceived in this way, and how students' identities shape their perceptions. Previous statistics from the 2019-2020 academic year indicates that there had been a 12% increase in referrals to the University of Oxford's sexual harassment and violence support service, even with the pandemic cutting the year short (SHVSS, 2020). This may indicate that the perceptions students have surrounding these policies have shifted and in order to address the increasing statistic, learning what is working and what is not working from a student perspective can be very beneficial in future policy amendments.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been identified as a potential participant as you are 18 years old or older and attend the University of Oxford as either an undergraduate or postgraduate student. You have indicated previously on a survey that you were willing to partake in the interview process and then you were chosen randomly out of a pool of participants who also indicated this (the interviews aim to involve 10 participants).

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You can withdraw yourself from the study, without giving a reason, and without negative consequences, by advising me of this decision. The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is two weeks after the interview is conducted. If you choose to withdraw during this time, any data that has already been collected will be destroyed.

What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

- The interview will take place either online in Microsoft Teams or in-person at Blackfriars Hall
- Informed consent will be collected via email dissemination of the written consent form and will need to be sent back to the researcher prior to the interview
- The interview should take no longer than 1 hour.

- Topics surrounding the University of Oxford's sexual harassment policy will be discussed. While this may be a sensitive topic, no personal experiences with this policy need to be shared with the researcher. The aim is to determine how and why participants perceive the policy in certain ways.
- With your consent, I would like to audio record you and video record you so I can have an accurate record of our conversation. The video recording will be connected to the audio recording but once the interview is complete, the audio will be separated from the video and the video will be deleted immediately.
- You will only need to participate in one interview.
- You may ask to stop or pause the interview at any time.
- No follow-up sessions are necessary, unless the researcher needs to clarify information, but that may occur over email.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

Because this study hopes to identify common perceptions participants hold surrounding the policy, rather than learning about actual events that may have occurred the risks are minimal. It is important to note that any personal stories surrounding a student's previous experience with this policy will be redacted from research outputs and the participants will not be identifiable. However, there is still a chance that due to the topic of conversation being that of sexual harassment and violence that it could be triggering and upsetting for participants. If you find this is the case, please let the researcher know and refrain from completing the study. If you are in need of counselling, please contact:

University Counselling Service
Tel: 01865 270300
Email: counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk

Furthermore, there is the risk of covid, that poses a threat to in-person interviews. If you are not comfortable participating in an in-person interview, arrangements can be made to conduct the interview online. In-person interviews will occur in a quiet, public space with good ventilation so as to mitigate the concern for covid-19 and masks will be worn if the participant requests it.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this research will lead to greater policy change and awareness on how to better support students who face sexual harassment and violence at the University of Oxford.

What information will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

Identifiable data (including consent forms, audio recordings, and transcripts) will be stored on the Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business, which requires a two-factor authentication, for 3 years after publication or public release of the research. Other research data will be stored for 3 years after publication or public release of the work or the research. Video recordings will be collected for the purpose of audio transcription but will be deleted immediately after separating the audio recording from the video recording. Only the researcher will have access to the research data.

Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up in a dissertation that will become published. Participants will not be identifiable from the research outputs. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the participants identity and no other private information such as birthdate, student status, department affiliation, college affiliation, etc. will be shared. The name of the university will remain identified as that is significant to the reporting of the study, but any personal stories that could later be traced back to a participant will be redacted from research outputs.

I would like your permission to use direct quotations ***but without identifying you*** in any research outputs.

A copy of my thesis/ dissertation will be deposited both in print and online in the Oxford University Research Archive where it will be publicly available to facilitate its use in future research.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available at https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: [redacted]

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact [redacted] or [redacted] and we will do our best to answer your query. *I* will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

The Chair, Education Departmental Research Ethics Committee;
Email: student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk; Address: Department of Education, University of Oxford, 16 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

[redacted]
Department of Education
OX2 6PY
University tel: [redacted]
University email: [redacted]

Appendix F: Written Consent Form

DEPARTMENT CONTACT DETAILS

[redacted]

Oxford University telephone number: [redacted]
Oxford University e-mail: [redacted]

Consent to take part in Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: [redacted]

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions held by students surrounding the formal sexual harassment policy, why this policy is perceived in this way, and how students' identities shape their perceptions.

	Please initial each box if you agree with the statement
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point until **two weeks after the date of the interview**, without giving any reason.	
I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	
I understand that I will not be identifiable from any publications or presentations.	
I consent to being video recorded.[1]	
I consent to being audio recorded.	
I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs.	
Use of quotations: Please indicate your preference (select *one* option):	
a) I do not wish to be quoted. **or**	
b) I agree to the use of quotations in research outputs if I am not identifiable.	

[1] MS Teams audio recordings require video to be recorded as well, the videos collected will not be used in research outputs

I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.	☐
I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.	☐
I agree to take part.	☐

_____	dd / mm / yyyy	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
_____	dd / mm / yyyy	_____
Name of person taking consent	Date[2]	Signature

Appendix G: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

[Interviews are semi-structured, therefore the questions listed will be the main topics to be discussed in the interview; but specific questions and follow-up ones will vary based on the participants' responses.]

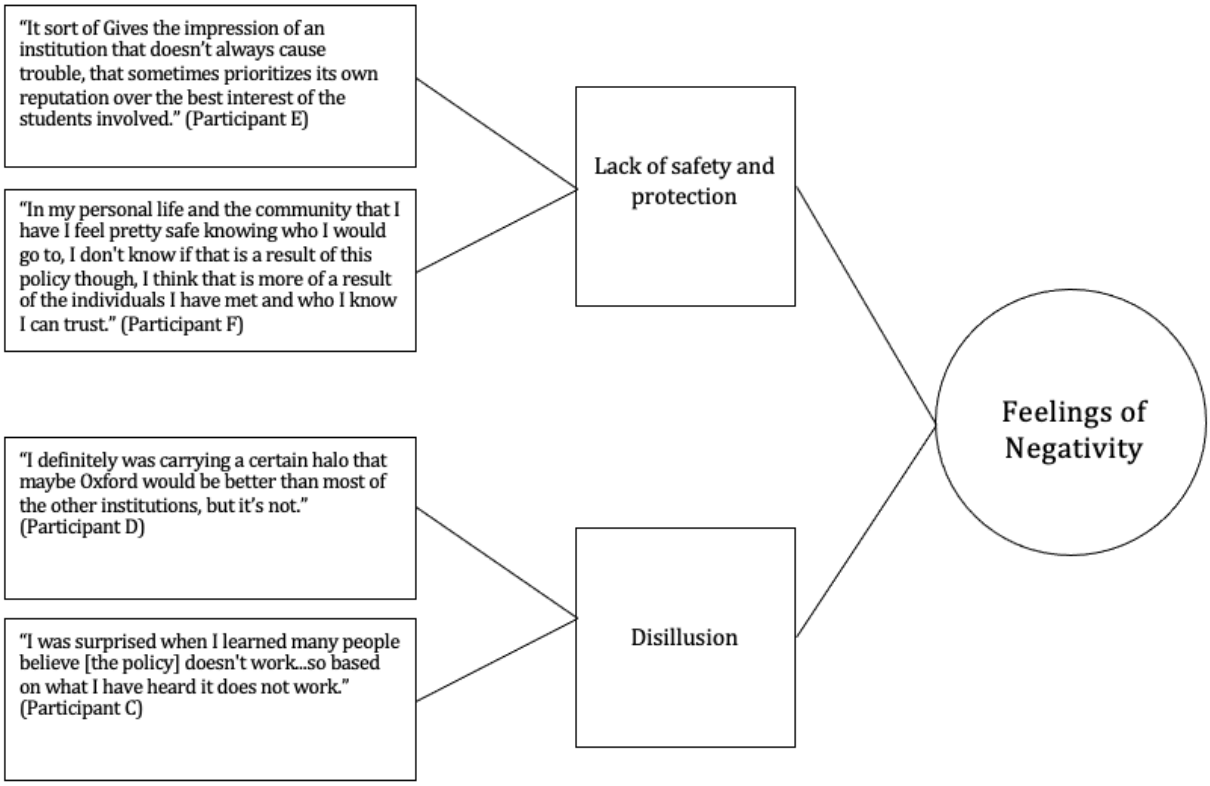
- What is the first word you think of when you hear the "University of Oxford's Sexual Harassment Policy"?
    - Can you elaborate on why this word came to mind?
- Has this policy shaped how you view the institution?
    - Why do you feel this way?
- Are the following definitions provided in the policy/policies comprehensive enough? Are they clear enough?
    - University of Oxford definition of "harassment":

      "Engaging in unwanted and unwarranted conduct which has the purpose or effect of:
        - violating another person's dignity, or
        - creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another person.
        - The recipient does not need to have explicitly stated that the behaviour was unwanted."
    - "Examples of behaviour which may amount to harassment under this Policy include (but are not limited to) the following: unwanted physical contact, ranging from an invasion of space to an assault, including all forms of sexual harassment, including:
        - inappropriate body language
        - sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes
        - unwanted sexual advances and touching"
- In your opinion, is this policy, as it stands now, actually helpful?
    - If so, in what ways?

- Do you think that because this policy exists there is less sexual harassment and violence occurring at the University of Oxford than say a university without a policy such as this?

- Do you think this policy could be improved in any way? Please elaborate.
- Is there anything else you would like me to know?

Appendix H: Coding Structure Example



Appendix I: CUREC Approval Email

CUREC approval [redacted]

[redacted]

To: [redacted]

Thu 5/19/2022 10:35 AM

Cc: Student CUREC

Dear [redacted]

Your application for 'Student Perceptions of University Sexual Harassment Policies' has been considered on behalf of the DREC in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, based on the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted. I would like to inform you that you will be required to update us on any amendments to your study should you need to change your research methods and may need to complete a data protection impact assessment if you use online platforms to conduct and record interviews. There is an application for this, and it is kept separate from the ethics committee. Please see the link below for more information.

https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/policy/data/checklist

Please continue to follow all current guidance issued by CUREC during the pandemic, notably COVID-19: CUREC guidance on research involving human participants, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/coronavirus

If needed, please follow the guidance on online data collection and research methods issued by the University,

(1) https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/covid-19/data#collapse2299911

(2) https://infosec.web.ox.ac.uk/article/guidelines-for-using-zoom

If relevant, please also check the CUREC website for their best practice research guides, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/bpg

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Departmental Research Ethics Committee Member
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Email: [redacted]

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD